North Amherst Ms. May 22d, 184

To the Society of Inquiry,
Prin. Theol. Sem. J. }

Dear Brethren,

If there is any sufficient reason for my intruding myself upon your attention, it is the fact that 3/4 of our race are perishing in ignorance of the gospel of salvation, which we Xns. might give them. I have hesitated about writing, but finally yield to my desire to try to do something for their salvation. I do not suppose that I am about to address you on a subject that is new to you, or one to which you are indifferent; but if you have thought of it much, you are the better prepared, & the more willing, to think of it more: for, like the love of Xt. the more it is thought of, the greater or better it seems.

The practical view of the subject, which it appears to me ought to be kept habitually in view by all Xns. is this. 1st More than 3/4 of the human race are ignorant of the gospel. 2. This gospel they must have, or, with few exceptions, they will perish in eternal woe. 3. Christians are able to give them this gospel; but not doing it with sufficient rapidity to save many of the present, or even the next generation. 4. While they are thus comparatively indifferent, the heathen die at the rate of 50.000 a day, & go away to dwell where there is weeping & gnashing of teeth forever. ¶ If Xns. could, & would, all keep these truths before their minds from day to day, I am sure they could not be so careless of the fate of the heathen, as most of them now are; & would not think it too much to increase their efforts for their salvation many fold. If this alone were not sufficient, I would strive to make the love of Xt.

the desire to please him, & honor him, & obey him, add to the force of the motives that urge us to zeal & onward enterprise in this work. He left heaven, with all its riches, honors, & pleasures, became in the form of a servant, a despised inhabitant of the hated Nazareth, & subjected himself to toils, & insults, & scourging, & death for the salvation of the world. The object is as dear to him now as it was when he died on the cross for it — dearer than his own hearts blood: & shall we care nothing, or only a little, for it? It is worth as much self-denial & effort by *us*, as was was by him; & shall we treat it as a mere secondary concern? less important than our own earthly pleasures & advantages? Again, he has commanded us to "go into all the world & preach the gospel to every creature; & declared that he sent us to this work, as the Father sent him to provide that See John 20:21. gospel. Where then is our gratitude or obedience, or our likeness to Xt. in feeling, purpose & object of life, if we make this a secondary object? —

But there is another practical view of the subject, which I think should be much before the minds of the *youth* of the church, & especially pious *students*. It is this.

1. There is no reason to expect that Xns. will ~~generally~~ soon be excited to much greater self-denial & effort for the salvation of men, unless some new & powerful impulse be brought to bear upon them.
2. There is no considerable probability of such an impulse being given to the feelings of Xns. on this subject, unless it be given by *the young men* of the church.

Something must be done, or most of the heathen that now are, will be lost; & that something must be done by *young men*. Of these young men, *you* are among those by whom the something may be most expected to be done. The responsibility resting upon you is consequently very great. If Andover & Princeton advance not in the missionary enterprise, where can we look for advance? If you can tell me, I will write thither, & try to move those that dwell there to set so an example of devotion to the work of doing good. But if there is no such place, then rests it not with you, of Andover & Princeton, more than with any else, to decide whether the needed advance be made; & whether the millions that hasten to the doom of the lost unwarned, & unacquainted with the love of Xt, shall perish uninstructed or not.

If you say there are more missionaries now than the churches will well sustain; I pray you to remember, & never forget again that they are _able_ to sustain thousands more; & it is only needful to awaken them to the necessity & privilege of doing it.

If several hundred young men would come forward & ask to be sent to the heathen, & declare that they _must_ go, whether they could have the promise of support by the churches or not; I think an impulse would be given to the cause that would save millions. If some few of them should go unsupported, & the heathen should not think the labourer worthy of his hire, nor even of his food, & they should starve, their lives would probably be well spent. It would be worth hundreds & thousands of lives to give the needed impulse to the work. Suppose 3000 lives should be sacrificed for the single object of arousing the churches to the importance of this great work: if they should be the means of hastening its accomplishment 30 years, so that the gospel should be published to the heathen world 30 years the sooner for it; & if one in ten only of those to whom it is published, should be saved by it; those 3000 lives would each be the means of saving 20.000 souls. Pray think of that more than once.

Brethren, the importance of an advance in self-denying effort for the salvation of men is not sufficiently felt. It is vastly beyond the power of words to tell. Millions, hundreds of millions must perish if it be not made, who may & will be saved, if we make it. God commands us to make it, for now we, as a community, are not making such efforts as he requires; the example of Xt. calls us to it, & all the motives that urged him to leave heaven & toil & suffer & die, urge us to leave all, do all, suffer all, by which we may promote the salvation of the world: & besides all these motives, gratitude to him who saved us from eternal woe, & gave us [illegible] of heaven urges us to it. "God is love," "agape", i.e. benevolent love: & if we would be like him, we must cherish benevolence. It is the essence of religion — benevolence to God & man. May you ever feel it, & show it, & teach it: & do it so earnestly, constantly, & successfully that the world will be the better, *much* better, for your having lived in it; & heaven the brighter for the many stars in your crowns of glory.

Your Xn. brother, Ira Tracy.

P.S. I have not stated the reasons why the needed influence to the miss'y cause [illegible] may be expected from young men for want of room, & because you will readily think of them. History proves it, as well as a look at the circumstances of young, & of older men.

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NORTH AMHERST MASS.
MAY 22

Society of Inquiry,
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